



US 20150038862A1

(19) **United States**
(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Gijsbers et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2015/0038862 A1**
(43) **Pub. Date: Feb. 5, 2015**

(54) **SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING AN ELECTRICAL ACTIVITY MAP**

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(21) Appl. No.: **13/984,313**

(22) PCT Filed: **Feb. 14, 2012**

(86) PCT No.: **PCT/IB2012/050650**

§ 371 (c)(1),
(2), (4) Date: **Mar. 11, 2014**

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

Feb. 17, 2011 (EP) 11154871.5

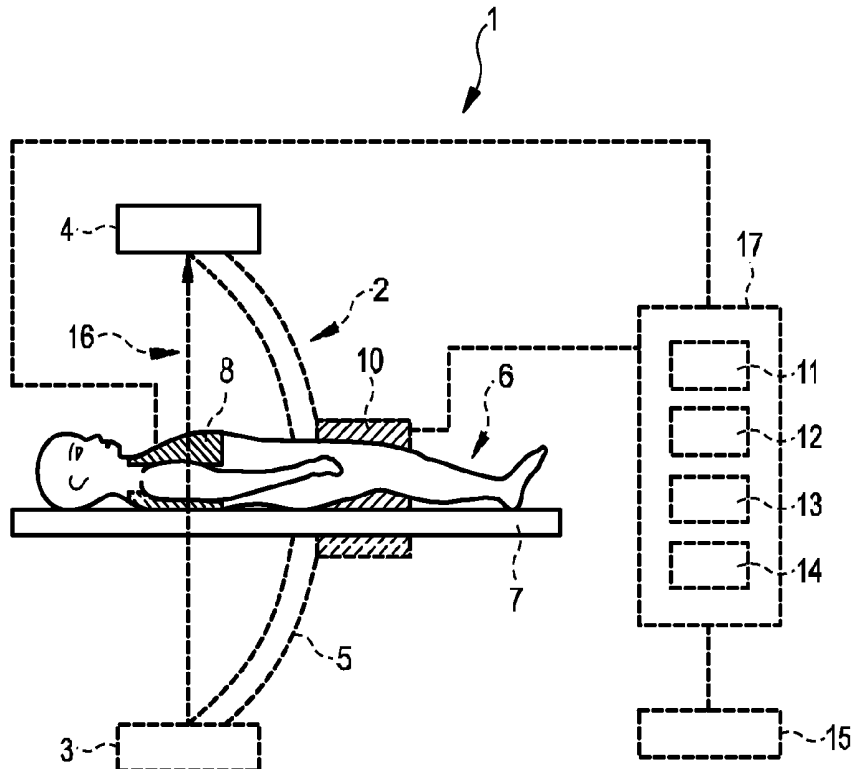
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A61B 5/0402 (2006.01)
A61B 5/00 (2006.01)
A61B 6/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC *A61B 5/0402* (2013.01); *A61B 6/503* (2013.01); *A61B 5/684* (2013.01)
USPC **600/509**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention relates to a system for providing an electrical cardiac activity map by means of electrical signals acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of a living being (6). A cardiac structure position determination unit (12) determines a position of a cardiac structure, in particular, of the epicardial surface, based on provided projection images, wherein an anatomical cardiac model is adapted to the projection images. The projection images may be provided by an x-ray C-arm system (2). An electrical activity map determination unit (13) determines the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure based on the electrical signals, the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes also determined from the projection images, and the determined position of the cardiac structure. This allows determining the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure with high accuracy, without necessarily needing, for instance, an x-ray computed tomography system that would apply a relatively high x-ray radiation dose to the living being. The electrodes may be comprised in a vest (8).



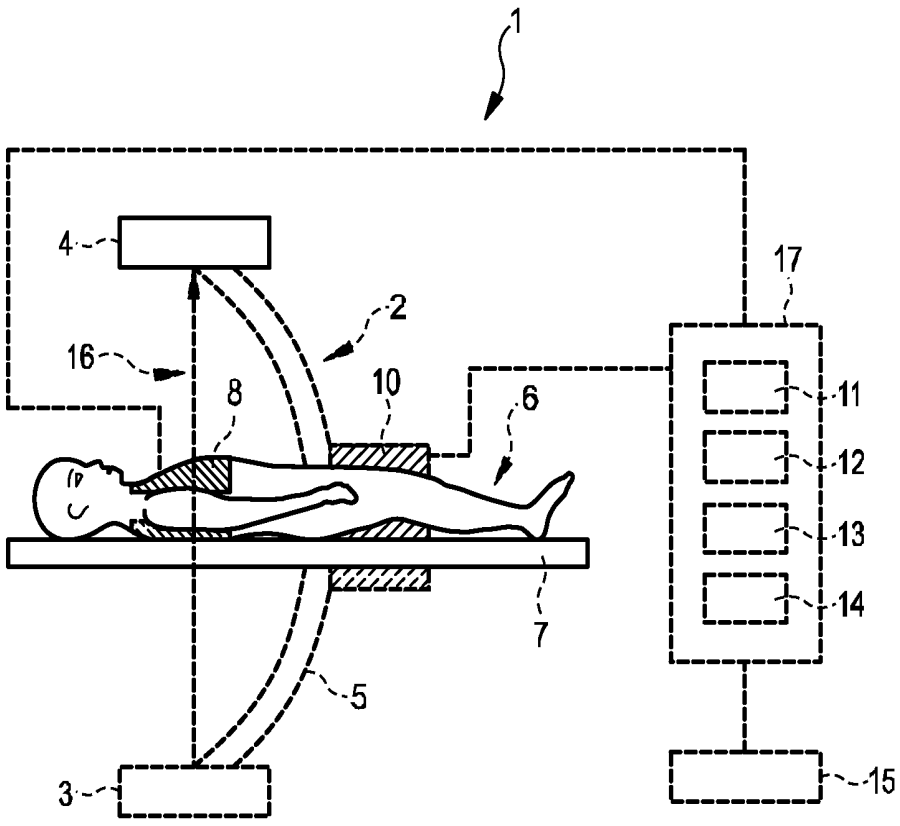


FIG. 1

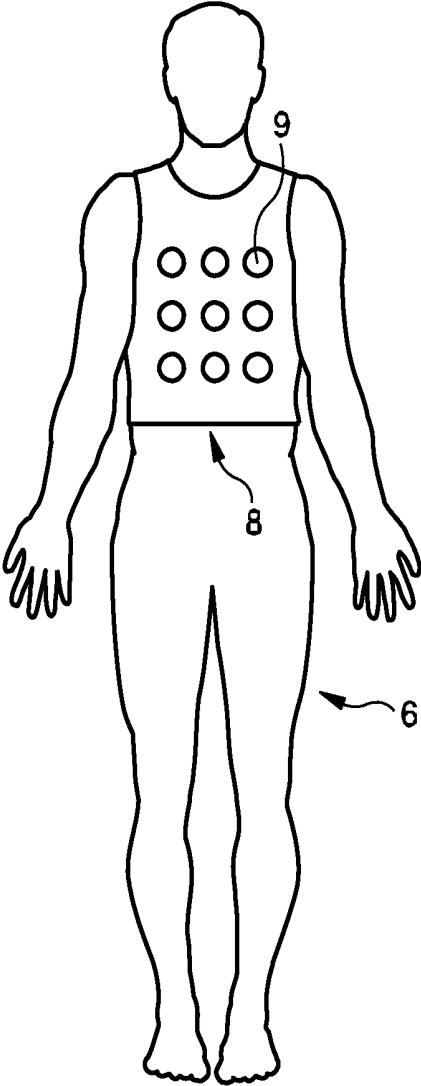


FIG. 2

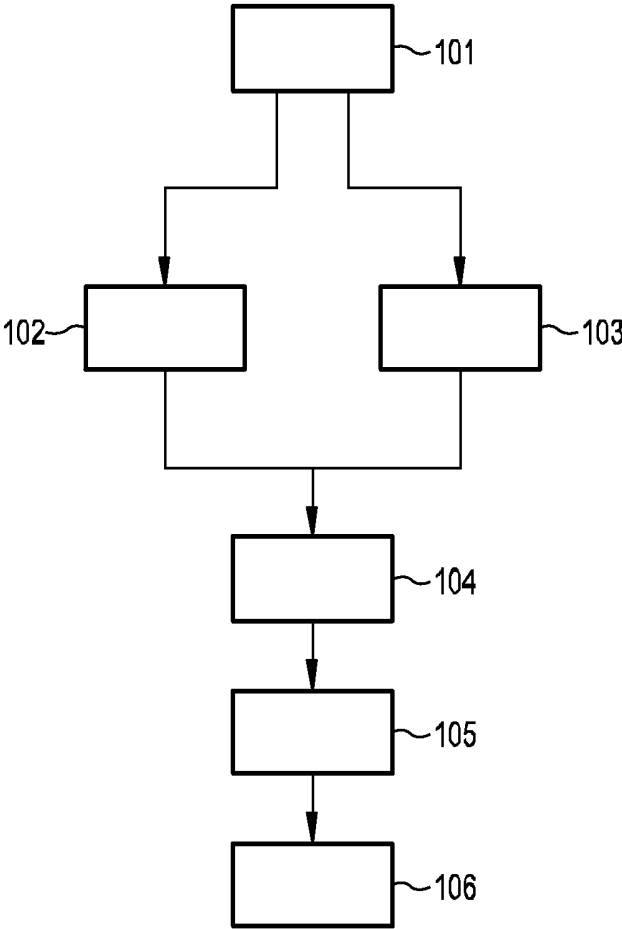


FIG. 3

SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING AN ELECTRICAL ACTIVITY MAP

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to a system, a method and a computer program for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of the living being.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] U.S. Pat. No. 7,471,973 B2 discloses a system comprising an electrode vest with surface electrodes for measuring electrical potentials on an outer surface of a person. The system further comprises a reconstruction unit for reconstructing epicardial electrical potentials based on i) the geometry between a heart surface and the outer surface of the person and ii) the measured electrical potentials. In order to determine the geometry between the heart surface and the outer surface of the person a first projection matrix is determined based on a first imaging device and a second projection matrix is determined based on a second imaging device. At least one first two-dimensional image of the heart is obtained by using the first imaging device, at least one second two-dimensional image of the heart is obtained by using the second imaging device, and a contour of the heart in the first two-dimensional image and a contour of the heart in the second two-dimensional image are determined. Three-dimensional data associated with the heart surface are reconstructed based on the two contours, the first projection matrix and the second projection matrix, and the heart surface is registered with the outer surface of the person. The geometry between the heart surface and the outer surface of the person is finally determined by employing a boundary element method.

[0003] This system has the drawback that the quality of the determined geometry between the heart surface and the outer surface of the person may be reduced, which may lead to a reduced accuracy of the epicardial electrical potentials that are determined based on this geometry.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] It is an object of the present invention to provide a system, a method and a computer program for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of the living being, wherein the provided electrical activity map has an improved quality.

[0005] In a first aspect of the present invention a system for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of the living being is presented, the system comprising:

[0006] a projection images providing unit for providing projection images of the heart and of the plurality of surface electrodes in different directions,

[0007] a surface electrodes positions determination unit for determining positions of the plurality of surface electrodes based on the provided projection images,

[0008] a cardiac structure position determination unit for determining a position of a cardiac structure of the living being based on the provided projection images, wherein

the cardiac structure position determination unit is adapted to adapt an anatomical cardiac model including the cardiac structure to the provided projection images of the heart, in order to determine the position of the cardiac structure,

[0009] an electrical activity map determination unit for determining the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure based on the electrical signals measured on the outer surface of the living being, the determined positions of the plurality of surface electrodes and the determined position of the cardiac structure.

[0010] Since the position of the cardiac structure of the living being is determined by adapting an anatomical cardiac model including the cardiac structure to the provided projection images of the heart, the position of the cardiac structure can be determined with a relatively high accuracy by just using a few projection images. Moreover, since the position of the cardiac structure can be determined with this high accuracy, also the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure, which is determined based on a) the electrical signals measured on the outer surface of the living being, b) the determined positions of the plurality of electrodes and c) the determined position of the cardiac structure, can be determined with increased accuracy, thereby increasing the quality of the determined electrical activity map.

[0011] The cardiac structure is preferentially the epicardial surface of the heart. The electrical activity map determination unit is therefore preferentially adapted to determine the electrical activity map on the epicardial surface of the heart based on the electrical signals measured on the outer surface of the living being, the determined positions of the plurality of electrodes and the determined position of the epicardial surface of the heart.

[0012] If the cardiac structure is three-dimensional, in particular, if the cardiac structure is the three-dimensional epicardial surface, the position of the cardiac structure preferentially defines the position of each point of the cardiac structure at which the electrical activity map should be determined. Thus, for instance, if the cardiac structure position determination unit determines the position of the epicardial surface, it determines at least the positions of the points on the epicardial surface for which an electrical potential should be determined for generating the electrical activity map.

[0013] The plurality of surface electrodes can be regarded as being an element of the system or it can be regarded as being a separate element, wherein the system is adapted to use the electrical signals of the surface electrodes for providing the electrical activity map.

[0014] The plurality of surface electrodes can be incorporated in a vest that can be worn by the living being. The living being is preferentially a person, but the living being can also be an animal.

[0015] The surface electrodes positions determination unit is preferentially adapted to determine the three-dimensional positions of the surface electrodes from two or more provided two-dimensional projection images being preferentially two-dimensional x-ray projection images. It can be adapted to provide a model distribution of the surface electrodes, to adapt the model distribution to the provided projection images and to determine the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes from the adapted model distribution. This allows determining the positions of the surface electrodes with high accuracy only based on the already provided projection images.

[0016] The cardiac model is preferentially a non-specific cardiac model. The non-specific cardiac model is an anatomical cardiac model, which is not specific to the respective living being, in particular, which is not specific to the respective person.

[0017] The cardiac structure position determination unit is preferentially adapted to adapt the anatomical cardiac model including the cardiac structure to the provided projection images of the heart by performing at least one of a translation procedure, a rotation procedure and a scaling procedure. Thus, in an embodiment the cardiac structure position determination unit can be adapted to just position and optionally scale a non-specific cardiac model such that it corresponds to the provided projection images, without modifying the shape of the cardiac model. This allows adapting the anatomical cardiac model to the provided projection images very fast. In another embodiment, also the shape of the anatomical cardiac model can be modified, in order to adapt the anatomical cardiac model to the provided projection images. For instance, the anatomical cardiac model can be stretched or compressed in certain directions for adapting the anatomical cardiac model to the provided projection images.

[0018] It is further preferred that the projection image providing unit is an x-ray C-arm system. The x-ray C-arm system allows acquiring projection images in different directions in a relatively simple way. The x-ray C-arm system can be adapted to perform a single axis C-arm movement or a dual axes C-arm movement. Moreover, the x-ray C-arm system can be a monoplane projection system or a biplane projection system. A biplane projection system can simultaneously acquire projection images in different directions. A monoplane projection system can be rotated with respect to the living being, in order to acquire the projection images in different directions.

[0019] In an embodiment, the projection images providing unit is a C-arc system for providing several two-dimensional x-ray projection images, the surface electrodes positions determination unit is adapted to determine the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes by performing a three-dimensional position modelling based on the several two-dimensional x-ray projection images, the cardiac structure position determination unit is adapted to match a non-patient specific generalized three-dimensional cardiac model with a cardiac contour in selected two-dimensional x-ray projection images from the several two-dimensional x-ray projection images, and the electrical activity map determination unit is adapted to determine the electrical activity map by performing an electrocardiographic mapping on the surface of the matched generalized three-dimensional cardiac model, thereby preferentially providing an approximate single beat, real time or near real time epicardial activation pattern with myocardial diagnostic capabilities ranging beyond current state-of-art ECG systems.

[0020] The projection images providing unit can also be a storing unit, in which the projection images are stored already and from which the projection images can be retrieved for providing the same. The projection images providing unit can also be a receiving unit for receiving the projection images via a wired or wireless data connection from a projection images acquisition unit like an x-ray C-arm system.

[0021] In a further aspect of the present invention a method for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired

by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of the living being is presented, the method comprising:

[0022] providing projection images of the heart and of the plurality of surface electrodes in different directions by a projection images providing unit,

[0023] determining positions of the plurality of surface electrodes based on the provided projection images by a surface electrodes positions determination unit,

[0024] determining a position of a cardiac structure of the living being based on the provided projection images by a cardiac structure position determination unit, wherein an anatomical cardiac model including the cardiac structure is adapted to the provided projection images of the heart, in order to determine the position of the cardiac structure,

[0025] determining the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure based on the electrical signals measured on the outer surface of the living being, the determined positions of the plurality of electrodes and the determined position of the cardiac structure by an electrical activity map determination unit.

[0026] In a further aspect of the present invention a computer program for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes being arranged on an outer surface of the living being is presented, the computer program comprising program code means for causing a system as defined in claim 1 to carry out the steps of the method as defined in claim 9, when the computer program is run on a computer controlling the system.

[0027] It shall be understood that the system of claim 1, the method of claim 9 and the computer program claim 10 have similar and/or identical preferred embodiments, in particular, as defined in the dependent claims.

[0028] It shall be understood that a preferred embodiment of the invention can also be any combination of the dependent claims with the respective independent claim.

[0029] These and other aspects of the invention will be apparent from and elucidated with reference to the embodiments described hereinafter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0030] In the following drawings:

[0031] FIG. 1 shows schematically and exemplarily an embodiment of a system for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being,

[0032] FIG. 2 shows schematically and exemplarily an embodiment of a vest comprising surface electrodes, and

[0033] FIG. 3 shows a flowchart exemplarily illustrating an embodiment of a method for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

[0034] FIG. 1 shows schematically and exemplarily an embodiment of a system for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of the living being. In this embodiment, the living being is a person 6 lying on a table 7. The person 6 wears a vest 8, which is schematically and exemplarily shown in FIG. 2. The vest 8 comprises a plurality of surface electrodes 9 that are in contact with the outer surface of the thorax of the person 6, in order to allow the surface electrodes 9 to acquire electrical signals, in particular, elec-

trical potentials, at the outer surface. The vest **8** with the plurality of surface electrodes **9** is electrically connected to a determination system **17** comprising an electrical activity map determination unit **13** for transferring the electrical signals measured by the plurality of surface electrodes **9** to the electrical activity map determination unit **13**.

[0035] It should be noted that the figures are not to scale. For instance, the surface electrodes **9** in the vest **8** shown in FIG. **2** have—relative to the dimensions of the person **6**—a much smaller diameter. Moreover, the electrodes **9** in the vest **8** are only schematically and exemplarily indicated in FIG. **2**, i.e., for instance, they can be distributed differently within the vest **8**. The vest **8** preferentially comprises several hundreds of the surface electrodes **9** covering the entire thorax of the person. The vest **8** is tightly attached to the skin of the thorax by an adhesive. Alternatively or in addition, the vest can comprise elastic textiles for tightly fitting the vest to the skin of the thorax.

[0036] The system **1** comprises a projection images providing unit **2** for providing projection images of the heart and of the plurality of surface electrodes **9** in different directions. In this embodiment, the projection images providing unit **2** is an x-ray C-arm system. The x-ray C-arm system **2** comprises an x-ray source **3** for emitting an x-ray beam **16** traversing the vest **8** and the heart of the person **6**. The x-ray beam **16** is preferentially a substantially conical x-ray beam that is dimensioned such that the surface electrodes **9** and the heart of the person **6** can be within the x-ray beam. After the x-ray beam **16** has traversed the vest **8** and the heart of the person **6** it is detected by an x-ray detector **4**. The x-ray detector **4** comprises a two-dimensional detection surface for generating two-dimensional projection images of the surface electrodes **9** and the heart of the person **6**. The x-ray source **3** and the x-ray detector **4** are mounted on a C-arm **5**, which is rotatable around the person **6** such that projection images can be acquired in different directions. The x-ray C-arm system **2** is controlled by a control unit **10**, wherein the generated projection images are provided via the control unit **10** to the determination system **17**. In another embodiment, the projection images can also be provided to the determination system **17** in another way. For instance, they can be transmitted to the determination unit not via the control unit **10**, but directly or via another unit.

[0037] In this embodiment, the x-ray C-arm system **2** is adapted to perform a single axis C-arm movement, i.e. a rotational movement around the person **6** that is defined by a single rotational axis. However, in another embodiment the x-ray C-arm system can also be adapted to perform a dual axis C-arm movement, i.e. a movement that can be defined by rotations around two rotational axis.

[0038] In this embodiment, the x-ray C-arm system **2** is a monoplane projection system, wherein at a time only a single projection image can be acquired. In another embodiment, the x-ray C-arm system can also be a biplane projection system comprising two x-ray sources and two x-ray detectors, which are arranged such that simultaneously two projection images can be acquired in two orthogonal projection directions.

[0039] The determination system **17** comprises a surface electrodes positions determination unit **11** for determining the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes **9** on the outer surface of the person **6** based on the provided projection images. In particular, the surface electrodes positions determination unit **11** is adapted to model the positions of the

surface electrodes **9** from the projection images, in order to determine the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes **9**. For instance, a model distribution of surface electrodes can be provided and the generation of the provided projection images can be simulated for generating simulated projection images by forward projecting the model distribution, wherein the model distribution of the surface electrodes can be modified such that deviations between projected surface electrodes positions in the provided actual projection images and in the simulated projection images are minimized. The resulting modified model distribution of the surface electrodes can then define the surface electrodes positions. In another embodiment, other known methods for determining three-dimensional positions of an object from two or more two-dimensional projection images can be used by the surface electrodes positions determination unit for determining the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes on the outer surface of the person based on the provided projection images.

[0040] Before determining the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes on the outer surface of the person based on the provided projection images, the contrast of the projected surface electrodes in the provided projection images can be increased by performing a contrast enhancement technique. For instance, several projection images, which have been acquired in the same projection geometry and without an intermediate movement of the person, can be averaged, in order to enhance the visibility of the surface electrodes in the projection images. If the person has moved between the acquisition of two projection images to be averaged, reference markers visible in the two images can be used for registering these two images, before averaging the images.

[0041] The determination system **17** further comprises a cardiac structure position determination unit **12** for determining a position of a cardiac structure of the person **6** based on the provided projection images, wherein the cardiac structure position determination unit **12** is adapted to adapt an anatomical cardiac model including the cardiac structure to the provided projection images of the heart, in order to determine the position of the cardiac structure. In this embodiment, the cardiac structure is the epicardial surface of the heart such that the anatomical cardiac model at least includes the epicardial surface of the heart. The anatomical cardiac model is preferentially a non-person-specific cardiac model. Thus, the anatomical cardiac model is preferentially a general anatomical cardiac model which can be obtained, for example, by segmenting the heart in a plurality of medical images of a plurality of persons, thereby generating a plurality of segmented hearts, and by averaging this plurality of segmented hearts.

[0042] The cardiac structure position determination unit **12** is preferentially adapted to translate, rotate and scale the cardiac model such that the transformed cardiac model corresponds to the provided projection images. The cardiac structure position determination unit **12** can also be adapted to additionally deform the cardiac model, i.e. to modify the shape of the cardiac model, in order to adapt the cardiac model to the provided projection images. For instance, the cardiac model can be stretched or compressed in certain directions for adapting the cardiac model to the provided projection images.

[0043] In particular, the cardiac structure position determination unit **12** can be adapted to generate simulated projection images, which correspond to the provided projection images, by simulating projections through the transformed cardiac model in the projection acquisition geometry used for acquir-

ing the actual provided projection images. The cardiac model can then be transformed such that at least regarding the epicardial surface deviations between the provided projection images and the simulated projection images are minimized.

[0044] The projection images, which are used for determining the position of the cardiac structure, in particular, the position of the epicardial surface, can be all provided projection images or only a selection of the provided projection images. The selection of provided projection images may include, for instance, a left anterior oblique projection image and a right anterior oblique projection image. However, also other projection images can be used for determining the position of the cardiac structure, in particular, the position of the epicardial surface.

[0045] The determination system further comprises the electrical activity map determination unit **13** for determining the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure, i.e., in this embodiment, on the epicardial surface, based on the electrical signals measured on the outer surface of the person **6**, the determined positions of the plurality of surface electrodes **9** and the determined position of the cardiac structure. For determining the electrical activity map well known methods can be used like the methods disclosed in the article "Electrocardiographic Imaging (ECGI): A Noninvasive Imaging Modality for Cardiac Electrophysiology and Arrhythmia" by Ramanathan et al., *Nature Medicine* 10, 422-428 (2004) or disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 7,471,971, which are herewith incorporated by reference. Moreover, known products from the companies CardioInsight Technologies and Amycard can be used for determining the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure, i.e. in this embodiment on the epicardial surface, based on the electrical signals measured on the outer surface of the person, the determined positions of the plurality of electrodes and the determined position of the cardiac structure.

[0046] The determination system **17** further comprises an analysis unit **14** for analyzing the electrical activity map for determining electrophysiological mechanisms of certain cardiac arrhythmias. Moreover, in addition or alternatively the analysis unit **14** may be adapted to analyze the electrical activity behaviour of cardiac dyssynchrony in heart failure patients as disclosed in the articles "Noninvasive Characterization of Epicardial Activation in Humans with Diverse Atrial Fibrillation Patterns" by P. S. Cuculich et al., *Circulation* 122, 1364-1372 (2010), "Electrocardiographic Imaging of Ventricular Bigeminy in a Human Subject" by Y. Wang et al., *Circulation Arrhythmia and Electrophysiology* 1, 74-75 (2008) and "Electrocardiographic Imaging of Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy in Heart Failure: Observations of Variable Electrophysiological Responses" by P. Jia et al., *Heart Rhythm Journal* 3, 296-310 (2006), which are herewith incorporated by reference.

[0047] In particular, the analysis unit can be adapted to perform at least one of following analyses based on the electrical activity map: determination of an anatomical position of ectopic foci, determination of an anatomical position of ventricular re-entries, distinguishing between re-entry or focal ventricular tachycardia and assessing of its localizations, assessing re-connection of pulmonary vein conduction and localization of culprit pulmonary veins, and assessment of effects of antiarrhythmic drugs.

[0048] The electrical activity map of the heart and optionally results of the analysis like determined anatomical positions of ectopic foci and ventricular re-entries can be shown on a display unit **15**.

[0049] In the following an embodiment of a method for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of the living being will exemplarily be described with reference to a flowchart shown in FIG. 3.

[0050] In step **101**, projection images of the heart and of the plurality of surface electrodes in different directions are provided by the projection images providing unit. For instance, an x-ray C-arm system is used for acquiring projection images of the heart and of the plurality of surface electrodes in different directions. In step **102**, positions of the plurality of surface electrodes are determined based on the provided projection images by the surface electrodes position determination unit. In particular, the positions of the surface electrodes are modeled from the projection images, in order to determine the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes. In step **103**, a position of a cardiac structure of the living being is determined based on the provided projection images by the cardiac structure position determination unit, wherein an anatomical cardiac model including the cardiac structure is adapted to the provided projection images of the heart, in order to determine the position of the cardiac structure. In this embodiment, the cardiac structure is the epicardial surface such that the position of the epicardial surface is determined by adapting an anatomical cardiac structure including the epicardial surface to the provided projection images of the heart. Steps **102** and **103** can be performed in an arbitrary order, i.e. they can be performed consecutively or simultaneously.

[0051] In step **104**, the electrical activity map determination unit determines the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure, i.e., in this embodiment, on the epicardial surface, based on the electrical signals measured on the outer surface of the person, the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes determined in step **102** and the position of the cardiac structure determined in step **103**. In step **105**, the analysis unit analyzes the electrical activity map, in order to determine, for example, anatomical positions of ectopic foci and/or of ventricular re-entries. In step **106**, the electrical activity map and optionally also results of the analysis like anatomical positions of ectopic foci and/or ventricular re-entries are shown on the display unit.

[0052] In the embodiment of the method for providing an electrical activity map of the heart described above with reference to FIG. 3 it is assumed that the electrical signals on the outer surface of the person have been measured already and are provided to the electrical activity map determination unit for allowing the electrical activity map determination unit to determine the electrical activity map. In another embodiment, the measurement of the electrical signals at the outer surface of the person can also be a part of the method for providing the electrical activity map, wherein in this case a corresponding electrical signals measurement step is performed before step **104**.

[0053] Electrocardiographic mapping (ECM) is a method where body surface signals, i.e. electrical signals like electrical potentials measured at the outer surface of the person, which are measured by a multitude of electrodes covering the entire human thorax, are used to calculate the activation of the epicardial surface of the heart. The electrodes are surface

electrodes, i.e. electrodes measuring electrical signals at the surface of the person, and they are contained in the vest that is tightly attached to the skin of the thorax by an adhesive. Since the position of the epicardial heart surface and the positions of the surface electrodes have been determined, the three-dimensional spatial relations between the epicardial heart surface and the surface electrodes are known. This enables the electrical activity map determination unit to compute an accurate single beat electrical activation pattern on the epicardial heart surface being the electrical activity map. The system described above with reference to FIG. 1 can therefore provide a non-invasive method for rapid assessment, i.e. within seconds to real time, of cardiac electrical activation. This electrocardiographic mapping can be performed, for example, during an electrophysiological procedure or during interventional cardiology procedures in a corresponding laboratory. However, the electrocardiographic mapping can also be performed for pre-interventional or post-interventional follow-up diagnostic procedures. In particular, the electrocardiographic mapping can be used to assess effects of antiarrhythmic drugs at certain points during a course of drug use and may be used for performing a high resolution electrocardiographic analysis.

[0054] The surface electrodes positions determination unit is preferentially adapted to perform a three-dimensional electrode position modelling from several two-dimensional x-ray projections of the x-ray C-arm system. The x-ray C-arm system is, for example, a Philips Allura Xper FD10 or FD20 system or a mobile x-ray C-arm system such as the Philips Veradius or BV systems. The x-ray C-arm system can be adapted to perform a biplane imaging for generating simultaneously two projection images, or it can be adapted to acquire two or more projection images by performing a monoplane C-arm imaging, wherein the surface electrodes positions determination unit can be adapted to determine the three-dimensional positions of all surface electrodes through three-dimensional modelling from two or more separate projection images being preferentially two-dimensional fluoroscopy or exposure x-ray images. The x-ray C-arm system can also be adapted to perform a dual axis C-arm movement, in order to move the x-ray source and the x-ray detector on an optimal trajectory to obtain all electrodes in selected x-ray frames for three-dimensional electrode position modelling.

[0055] The system described above with reference to FIG. 1 can be operated to determine the electrical activity map by only requiring a short C-arm acquisition protocol without any sterility requirements, i.e. the person does not need to be undressed et cetera, with very limited x-ray dose burden.

[0056] The cardiac structure position determination unit preferentially matches a non-patient-specific generalized three-dimensional cardiac model with the cardiac contour as imaged under different projection angles selected from the two-dimensional x-ray runs used for modelling the three-dimensional electrode positions. The electrical activity map determination unit preferentially performs an electrocardiographic mapping on the surface of the generalized cardiac model, in order to provide an approximate single beat epicardial activation pattern with myocardial diagnostic capabilities ranging far beyond known electrocardiography systems that only provide very coarse information about myocardial activation.

[0057] The system described above with reference to FIG. 1 provides an electrocardiographic mapping based on three-dimensional modelling of vest electrode positions by means

of rapid C-arm imaging combined with matching of a generalized three-dimensional cardiac model. The system can therefore provide an electrocardiographic diagnostic tool that can be used for obtaining, for instance, pre-interventional and post-interventional information that is not obtainable by known electrocardiographic systems. For example, information can be provided such as reasonably accurate positions of ectopic foci, reasonable accurate positions of ventricular re-entries, information that distinguishes between re-entry or focal ventricular tachycardia and its localizations, information about re-connection of pulmonary vein conduction and localization of culprit pulmonary veins, in order to be at least able to distinguish between left and right pulmonary veins, and information about effects of antiarrhythmic drugs, in particular, of changes in use of antiarrhythmics drugs.

[0058] Other variations to the disclosed embodiments can be understood and effected by those skilled in the art in practicing the claimed invention, from a study of the drawings, the disclosure, and the appended claims.

[0059] In the claims, the word “comprising” does not exclude other elements or steps, and the indefinite article “a” or “an” does not exclude a plurality.

[0060] A single unit or device may fulfill the functions of several items recited in the claims. The mere fact that certain measures are recited in mutually different dependent claims does not indicate that a combination of these measures cannot be used to advantage.

[0061] Determinations like the determination of the surface electrodes positions, the determination of the cardiac structure position, the determination of the electrical activity map and the analysis of the electrical activity map performed by one or several units or devices can be performed by any other number of units or devices. For example, steps 102 to 105 can be performed by a single unit or by any other number of different units. The determinations and/or the analysis of the electrical activity map and/or the control of the system for providing an electrical activity map in accordance with the method for providing an electrical activity map can be implemented as program code means of a computer program and/or as dedicated hardware.

[0062] A computer program may be stored/distributed on a suitable medium, such as an optical storage medium or a solid-state medium, supplied together with or as part of other hardware, but may also be distributed in other forms, such as via the Internet or other wired or wireless telecommunication systems.

[0063] Any reference signs in the claims should not be construed as limiting the scope.

[0064] The invention relates to a system for providing an electrical cardiac activity map by means of electrical signals acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of a living being. A cardiac structure position determination unit determines a position of a cardiac structure, in particular, of the epicardial surface, based on the provided projection images, wherein an anatomical cardiac model is adapted to the projection images. An electrical activity map determination unit determines the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure based on the electrical signals, positions of the plurality of surface electrodes also determined from the projection images and the determined position of the cardiac structure. This allows determining the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure with high accuracy, without necessar-

ily needing, for instance, an x-ray computed tomography system that would apply a relatively high x-ray radiation dose to the living being.

1. A system for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of the living being, the system (1) comprising:

a projection images providing unit (2) for providing projection images of the heart and of the plurality of surface electrodes (9) in different directions,

a surface electrodes positions determination unit (11) for determining positions of the plurality of surface electrodes (9) based on the provided projection images,

a cardiac structure position determination unit (12) for determining a position of a cardiac structure of the living being based on the provided projection images, wherein the cardiac structure position determination unit (12) is adapted to adapt an anatomical cardiac model including the cardiac structure to the provided projection images of the heart, in order to determine the position of the cardiac structure,

an electrical activity map determination unit (13) for determining the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure based on the electrical signals measured on the outer surface of the living being (6), the determined positions of the plurality of surface electrodes (9) and the determined position of the cardiac structure.

2. The system as defined in claim 1, wherein the surface electrodes positions determination unit (11) is adapted to provide a model distribution of the surface electrodes, to adapt the model distribution to the provided projection images and to determine the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes (9) from the adapted model distribution.

3. The system as defined in claim 1, wherein the cardiac model is a non-specific cardiac model.

4. The system as defined in claim 3, wherein the cardiac structure position determination unit (12) is adapted to adapt the anatomical cardiac model including the cardiac structure to the provided projection images of the heart by performing at least one of a translation procedure, a rotation procedure and a scaling procedure.

5. The system as defined in claim 1, wherein the projection image providing unit (2) is an x-ray C-arm system.

6. The system as defined in claim 5, wherein the x-ray C-arm system (2) is adapted to perform a single axis C-arm movement or a dual axes C-arm movement.

7. The system as defined in claim 5, wherein the x-ray C-arm system (2) is a monoplane projection system or a biplane projection system.

8. The system as defined in claim 1, wherein the projection images providing unit (2) is a C-arc system for providing several two-dimensional x-ray projection images,

the surface electrodes positions determination unit (11) is adapted to determine the positions of the plurality of surface electrodes (9) by performing a three-dimensional position modelling based on the several two-dimensional x-ray projection images,

the cardiac structure position determination unit (12) is adapted to match a non-patient specific generalized three-dimensional cardiac model with a cardiac contour in selected two-dimensional x-ray projection images from the several two-dimensional x-ray projection images, and

the electrical activity map determination unit (13) is adapted to determine the electrical activity map by performing an electrocardiographic mapping on the surface of the matched generalized three-dimensional cardiac model.

9. A method for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes on an outer surface of the living being, the method comprising:

providing projection images of the heart and of the plurality of surface electrodes in different directions by a projection images providing unit (2),

determining positions of the plurality of surface electrodes (9) based on the provided projection images by a surface electrodes positions determination unit (11),

determining a position of a cardiac structure of the living being based on the provided projection images by a cardiac structure position determination unit (12), wherein an anatomical cardiac model including the cardiac structure is adapted to the provided projection images of the heart, in order to determine the position of the cardiac structure,

determining the electrical activity map at the cardiac structure based on the electrical signals measured on the outer surface of the living being, the determined positions of the plurality of electrodes and the determined position of the cardiac structure by an electrical activity map determination unit (13).

10. A computer program for providing an electrical activity map of the heart of a living being by means of electrical signals from the heart acquired by a plurality of surface electrodes being arranged on an outer surface of the living being, the computer program comprising program code means for causing a system as defined in claim 1.

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专利名称(译)	用于提供电活动图的系统		
公开(公告)号	US20150038862A1	公开(公告)日	2015-02-05
申请号	US13/984313	申请日	2012-02-14
[标]申请(专利权)人(译)	GIJSBERS赫拉尔杜斯亨里克斯MARIA 凌科HENDRIKUS伯纳德斯 SLEGT SANDER NIJHOF NIELS		
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IPC分类号	A61B5/0402 A61B5/00 A61B6/00		
CPC分类号	A61B5/0402 A61B5/684 A61B6/503 A61B5/0408 A61B5/04085 A61B5/065 A61B5/6805 A61B6/02 A61B6/4441 A61B8/4254 A61B2576/023 A61B6/00 G16H30/40 A61B8/0883 A61B8/12		
优先权	2011154871 2011-02-17 EP		
其他公开文献	US10548496		
外部链接	Espacenet USPTO		

摘要(译)

本发明涉及一种借助于由生物外表面上的多个表面电极获取的电信号来提供电心脏活动图的系统(6)。心脏结构位置确定单元(12)基于所提供的投影图像确定心脏结构的位置,特别是心外膜表面的位置,其中解剖学心脏模型适合于投影图像。投影图像可以由x射线C臂系统提供(2)。电活动图确定单元(13)基于电信号确定心脏结构处的电活动图,多个表面电极的位置也根据投影图像确定,并且确定的位置心脏结构这允许以高精度确定心脏结构处的电活动图,而不一定需要例如将对生物施加相对高的X射线辐射剂量的X射线计算机断层摄影系统。电极可以包括在背心中(8)。

